IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

TAKERA SIMS 1508 S. Garnet Street Philadelphia, PA 19146	: : CIVIL ACTION : : No.:
Plaintiff,	:
v .	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
FAIRMOUNT LONG TERM CARE d/b/a Philadelphia Nursing Home 2100 W. Girard Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19130	: JURY TRIAL DEMANDED :
Defendant.	: : :

CIVIL ACTION COMPLAINT

Takera Sims (hereinafter referred to as "Plaintiff," unless indicated otherwise) by and through her undersigned counsel, hereby avers as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. Plaintiff has initiated this action to redress violations by Fairmount Long Term Care d/b/a Philadelphia Nursing Home of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("Title VII" – 42 U.S.C. §§ 200(d) et seq.) / the Pregnancy Discrimination Act ("PDA"), the American's with Disabilities Act, as amended ("ADA" – 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101 et seq.), the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act ("PHRA") and the Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance ("PFPO"). As a direct consequence of Defendant's unlawful actions, Plaintiff seeks damages as set forth herein.

¹ Plaintiff's claims under the PHRA and PFPO are referenced herein for notice purposes. She is required to wait 1 full year before initiating a lawsuit from date of dual-filing with the EEOC. Plaintiff must however file her lawsuit in advance of same because of the date of issuance of her federal right-to-sue letter under Title VII/PDA and the

JUISDICTION AND VENUE

- 2. This Court has original subject matter jurisdiction over the instant action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1342(a)(4) because it arises under the laws of the United States and seeks redress for violations of federal laws.
- 3. This Court may properly assert personal jurisdiction over the Defendant because its contacts with this state and this judicial district are sufficient for the exercise of jurisdiction over Defendant to comply with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice, satisfying the standards set forth by the United States Supreme Court in *International Shoe Co. v. Washington*, 325 U.S. 310 (1945) and its progeny.
- 4. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(1) and (b)(2), venue is properly laid in this district because Defendant is deemed to reside where it is subjected to personal jurisdiction, rendering Defendant a resident of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.
- 5. Plaintiff is proceeding herein under Title VII/PDA and ADA after properly exhausting all administrative remedies with respect to such claims by timely filing a Charge of Discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC") and by filing the instant lawsuit within ninety ("90") days of receiving a notice of dismissal and/or right-to-sue letter from the EEOC.

PARTIES

- 6. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
 - 7. Plaintiff is an adult individual with an address as set forth in the caption.

ADA. Plaintiff's PHRA and PFPO claims however will mirror identically her federal claims under Title VII/PDA and the ADA.

- 8. Defendant Fairmount Long Term Care d/b/a Philadelphia Nursing Home (hereinafter referred to as "Defendant") is a non-profit (non-stock) assisted living center, located at the above-captioned address.
- 9. At all times relevant herein, Defendant acted by and through its agents, servants and employees, each of whom acted at all times relevant herein in the course and scope of their employment with and for the Defendant.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

- 10. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
 - 11. Plaintiff is a female individual.
- 12. On or about March 9, 2017, Plaintiff was hired by Defendant as a full-time Certified Nursing Assistant ("CNA") responsible for administering care and treatments to residents of Defendant.
- 13. In or about late-June of 2017, Plaintiff became aware that she was pregnant and apprised Defendant's management, including but not limited to Alison Siano (Unit Manager, hereinafter "Siano") and Susan Grande (Assistant Nursing Director, hereinafter "Grande") of the same.
- 14. During the course of her aforementioned pregnancy, Plaintiff had medical complications and was designated as a high-risk pregnancy by her physicians due to pregnancy-induced hypertension and increased risk of Preeclampsia. As a result of these complications, Plaintiff required reasonable accommodations, including but not limited to temporary light duty, wherein she would not be required to lift and care for Defendant's heavier residents without assistance.

- 15. In or about late-September of 2017, Plaintiff supplied Siano and Sophie (last name unknown Unit Manager, *hereinafter* "Sophie") with a doctor's note recommending she only perform light duty due to the aforesaid complications (pregnancy-induced hypertension and increased risk of Preeclampsia) related to her pregnancy. In response, Plaintiff was told by Siano that she would not be accommodated in any way. Therefore, Plaintiff continued to perform her job full duty.
- 16. Upon information and belief other non-pregnant CNAs within Defendant had been accommodated because of work limitations and/or restrictions (sometimes despite the fact that they failed to present a doctor's note advising of same). By way of example, two CNAs named Barbara (last name unknown) and Tiffany (last name unknown) were often accommodated when asked to assist Defendant's heavier residents.
- 17. Further, requests made by Plaintiff to take off work in order to attend pregnancy-related doctor's appointments were ignored and dismissed by Defendant's management, thereby forcing Plaintiff to miss multiple scheduled appointments
- 18. In or about early-November of 2017, Plaintiff complained to Siano and Lillian (last name unknown Charge Nurse, *hereinafter* "Lillian") about the unfair and discriminatory treatment she was being subjected to because of her pregnancy and related medical conditions. In her discussion with Siano, Plaintiff made Siano aware that she knew of other non-pregnant CNAs who were regularly accommodated upon request regarding their work limitations/restrictions.
- 19. On or about December 23, 2017, Plaintiff was called into the office of Grande over an alleged incident of insubordination. During the conversation that followed, Plaintiff

again complained of the unfair and discriminatory treatment she had been experiencing for months since apprising Defendant's management of her pregnancy.

- 20. Instead of investigating or resolving Plaintiff's aforesaid legitimate complaints of discrimination, Grande informed Marie Buck (Director, *hereinafter* "Buck") of Plaintiff's alleged insubordination and thereafter immediately suspended her pending an investigation.
- 21. In a meeting with Buck a few days after her aforesaid December 23, 2017 meeting with Grande, Plaintiff once again complained that she was being treated unfairly and subjected to pregnancy and disability discrimination. Plaintiff had complained to Buck (as well as Siano, Lillian, and Grande) previously regarding the same and in response, Buck told Plaintiff to "keep her mouth shut" and abruptly ended the meeting.
- 22. Shortly thereafter, with her aforesaid suspension ongoing, Plaintiff received notification from Defendant that she was terminated.
- 23. Defendant's purported reason for termination (i.e. insubordination) is completely absurd and pretextual as she was not insubordinate in any way, nor had she received any significant progressive-discipline leading up to her termination from Defendant.
- 24. Therefore, Plaintiff believes and avers that she was terminated because of: (1) her pregnancy; (2) her known, perceived, and/or record of disabilities; (3) in retaliation for her complaints about discrimination; and/or (4) in retaliation for requesting reasonable accommodations.

COUNT I Violations of Title VII/PDA

([1] Pregnancy Discrimination; [2] Retaliation; [3] Hostile Work Environment)

- 25. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 26. After apprising Defendant's management of her pregnancy and requesting temporary light-duty (as a result of having a high-risk pregnancy) per her doctors' orders, Defendant's management, including but not limited Siano, Grande, Lillian and Buck repeatedly ignored Plaintiff's requests and did not accommodate her in any way even though similarly-situated CNAs who were not pregnant and did not supply Defendant with a medical note were accommodated.
- 27. Defendant's lack of accommodations and disparate treatment towards Plaintiff were so deleterious it (at times) affected her ability to work.
- 28. Plaintiff expressed these aforesaid concerns of discrimination to Defendant's management, including but not limited to Siano, Grande, Lillian and Buck.
- 29. Instead of investigating or resolving Plaintiff's aforementioned legitimate concerns of pregnancy discrimination, they were ignored and Plaintiff continued to be subjected to discriminatory treatment up and until the time of her termination.
- 30. Within short temporal proximity of her complaints of discrimination to Grande and Buck, Plaintiff was abruptly terminated for a stand-alone incident of alleged insubordination.
- 31. Plaintiff though was not insubordinate and had not received any significant progressive discipline during her entire tenure with Defendant.
- 32. Therefore, Plaintiff believes and avers the alleged reason for her termination was completely pretextual and that she was really subjected to a hostile work environment and

terminated from Defendant because of her pregnancy and/or complaints of pregnancy discrimination.

33. This action as aforesaid constitutes unlawful discrimination, retaliation, and hostile work environment under Title VII/PDA.

COUNT II

Violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended ("ADA") ([1] Actual/Perceived/Record of Disability Discrimination; [2] Retaliation; [3] Hostile Work Environment; [4] Failure to Accommodate)

- 34. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 35. In or about late-June of 2017, Plaintiff informed Defendant's management that she was pregnant and diagnosed with pregnancy-induced hypertension and increased risk of Preeclampsia. This caused Plaintiff weakness, exhaustion and at times limited her daily life activities, including but not limited to lifting, pushing, pulling, and controlling her blood pressure.²
- 36. As a result of her pregnancy-induced hypertension, increased risk of Preeclampsia and related symptoms, Plaintiff was given medical restrictions per doctors' orders limiting her to only light duty a reasonable accommodation.

While pregnancy itself is not considered a disability under the ADA, Courts throughout the United States have held, in light of the 2008 amendments to the ADA that "complications arising out of pregnancy can constitute disability sufficient to invoke the ADA, and that whether they actually rise to the level of disability is a question of fact." Oliver v. Scranton Materials, Inc., No. 3:14-CV-00549, 2015 WL 1003981, at *7-8 (M.D. Pa. Mar. 5, 2015); See also Mayorga v. Alorica, Inc., No. 12-21578-CIV, 2012 WL 3043021, at *5 (S.D. Fla. July 25, 2012) ("Thus, where a medical condition arises out of a pregnancy and causes an impairment separate from the symptoms associated with a healthy pregnancy, or significantly intensifies the symptoms associated with a healthy pregnancy, such medical condition may fall within the ADA's definition of a disability"). Hernandez v. City of Hartford, 959 F.Supp. 125 (D.Conn.1997) (premature onset of labor that could only be controlled with medication constituted a disability); Gabriel v. City of Chicago, 9 F.Supp.2d 974 (N.D.Ill.1998) (back pain, stomach pain, swelling, and premature birth constituted "physical impairments"); Soodman v. Wildman, Harrold, Allen & Dixon, No. 95C3834, 1997 WL 106257, at *6 (N.D.Ill. Feb. 10, 1997) (incompetent cervix causing danger of pre-term labor constituted disability under ADA); Cerrato v. Durham, 941 F.Supp. 388 (S.D.N.Y.1996) (denying motion to dismiss ADA claim when the plaintiff suffered from spotting, leaking, cramping, dizziness, and nausea during pregnancy).

- 37. Defendant's management ignored Plaintiff's requests for reasonable accommodations and subjected her to hostility and disparate treatment.
- 38. In response, Plaintiff complained of this aforesaid discriminatory conduct to Defendant's management, including but not limited to Siano, Lillian, Grande and Buck who instead of resolving or investigating the matter, proceeded to ignore Plaintiff's complaints and leave them unresolved.
- 39. Shortly after her last complaint to Buck about the aforementioned discrimination, Plaintiff was abruptly terminated for pretextual reasons allegedly related to insubordination, even though Plaintiff did not have any significant formal discipline against her.
- 40. Therefore, Plaintiff believes and avers that she was terminated from Defendant because of her actual and/or perceived disabilities, record of impairment, and/or requested accommodations
- 41. Plaintiff also believes and therefore avers that Defendant failed to accommodate her by refusing to provide her with light duty (even though this has proven to be a reasonable accommodation for other employees working within Defendant).
- 42. These actions as aforesaid constitute unlawful discrimination, retaliation, a hostile work environment and a failure to accommodate under the ADA.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that this Court enter an Order providing that:

- A. Defendant is to promulgate and adhere to a policy prohibiting discrimination in the future against any employee(s);
- B. Defendant is to compensate Plaintiff, reimburse Plaintiff, and make Plaintiff whole for any and all pay and benefits Plaintiff would have received had it not been for

Defendant's illegal actions, including but not limited to back pay, front pay, salary, pay

increases, bonuses, insurance, training, promotions, reinstatement and seniority;

C. Plaintiff is to be awarded punitive damages, as permitted by applicable law, in an

amount believed by the Court or trier of fact to be appropriate to punish Defendant for their

willful, deliberate, malicious and outrageous conduct and to deter Defendant or other employers

from engaging in such misconduct in the future;

D. Plaintiff is to be accorded other equitable and legal relief as the Court deems just,

proper, and appropriate (including but not limited to damages for emotional distress, pain,

suffering, and humiliation); and

E. Plaintiff is to be awarded the costs and expenses of this action and reasonable

attorney's fees as provided by applicable federal and state law.

Respectfully submitted,

KARPF, KARPF & CERUTTL-P.C.

By:

Ari R. Karpf, Esq. 3331 Street Rd.

Two Greenwood Square, Suite 128

Bensalem, PA 19020

(215) 639-0801

Date: July 17, 2018

9

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

CASE MANAGEMENT TRACK DESIGNATION FORM

CIVIL ACTION

	Telephone	FAX Num	ber	E-Mail Address				
	(215) 639-0801	(215) 639-49	70	akarpf@karpf-law.com				
	Date	Attorney-a	t-law	Attorney for				
	7/17/2018		>	Plaintiff				
	(f) Standard Manageme	ent - Cases that do no	t fall into any one	of the other tracks.	(X)			
•	the court. (See rever management cases.)	to as complex and tha rse side of this form f	it need special or i for a detailed expl	ntense management by anation of special	()			
(d) Asbestos – Cases involving claims for personal injury or property damage from exposure to asbestos.								
	(c) Arbitration - Cases	(c) Arbitration - Cases required to be designated for arbitration under Local Civil Rule 53.2.						
	(b) Social Security - Cases requesting review of a decision of the Secretary of Health and Human Services denying plaintiff Social Security Benefits.							
	(a) Habeas Corpus - Cases brought under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 through § 2255.							
	SELECT ONE OF TH							
	plaintiff shall complete filing the complaint and side of this form.) In designation, that defend	a Case Management ' serve a copy on all de the event that a defer ant shall, with its firs r parties, a Case Man	Frack Designation fendants. (See § 1 ndant does not ag t appearance, subr agement Track De	ction Plan of this court, couns. Form in all civil cases at the ti 03 of the plan set forth on the reree with the plaintiff regarding nit to the clerk of court and ser esignation Form specifying the	me of everse g said ve on			
Fairmount L	ong Term Care d/b/a Philade	élphia Nursing Home	;	NO.				
	v.	-	:					
	Takera	Sims	•	CIVILACTION				

(Civ. 660) 10/02

Case 2:18-cv-02963-HB Document 1 Filed 07/17/18 Page 11 of 12 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

DESIGNATION FORM(to be used by counsel or pro se plaintiff to indicate the category of the case for the purpose of assignment to the appropriate calendar)

Address of Plaintiff: 1508 S. Garnet Street, Philadelphia, PA 19146							
Address of Defendant: 2100 W. Girard Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19130							
Place of Accident, Incident or Transaction: Defendant's place of business							
RELATED CASE, IF ANY:							
Case Number: Judge: Date Terminated:							
Civil cases are deemed related when Yes is answered to any of the following questions:							
1. Is this case related to property included in an earlier numbered suit pending or within one year Yes No X							
2. Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out of the same transaction as a prior suit Yes No X pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court?							
3. Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a patent already in suit or any earlier numbered case pending or within one year previously terminated action of this court?							
4. Is this case a second or successive habeas corpus, social security appeal, or pro se civil rights Yes No X							
I certify that, to my knowledge, the within case is / is not related to any case now pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court except as noted above.							
DATE: 7/17/2018 ARK2484/91538							
Attorney-at-Law / Pro Se Plaintiff Attorney I.D. # (if applicable)							
CIVIL: (Place a √ in one category only)							
A. Federal Question Cases: B. Diversity Jurisdiction Cases:							
□ 1. Indemnity Contract, Marine Contract, and All Other Contracts □ 1. Insurance Contract and Other Contracts □ 2. FELA □ 2. Airplane Personal Injury □ 3. Jones Act-Personal Injury □ 3. Assault, Defamation □ 4. Antitrust □ 4. Marine Personal Injury □ 5. Patent □ 5. Motor Vehicle Personal Injury □ 6. Labor-Management Relations □ 6. Other Personal Injury (Please specify): □ 7. Products Liability Products Liability - Asbestos □ 8. Products Liability - Asbestos □ 9. Securities Act(s) Cases □ 9. All other Diversity Cases □ 10. Social Security Review Cases □ 9. All other Diversity Cases □ 11. Insurance Contract and Other Contracts □ 2. Airplane Personal Injury □ 3. Assault, Defamation □ 4. Marine Personal Injury □ 5. Motor Vehicle Personal Injury □ 7. Products Liability - Asbestos □ 9. All other Diversity Cases □ 9. All other Diversity Cases □ 10. Please specify):							
ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION (The effect of this certification is to remove the case from eligibility for arbitration.)							
I, Ari R. Karpf , counsel of record or pro se plaintiff, do hereby certify:							
Pursuant to Local Civil Rule 53.2, § 3(c) (2), that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the damages recoverable in this civil action case exceed the sum of \$150,000.00 exclusive of interest and costs:							
Relief other than monetary damages is sought.							
DATE: 7/17/2018 ARK2484 / 91538 Attorney-at-Law / Pro Se Plaintiff Attorney I.D. # (if applicable)							
NOTE: A trial de novo will be a trial by jury only if there has been compliance with F.R.C.P. 38.							

JS 44 (Rev. 06/17)

Print

Save As...

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet.

purpose of initiating the civil de	ocket sneet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE	OF THIS FC	PRM.)					
I. (a) PLAINTIFFS			DEFENDANTS	12.				
SIMS, TAKERA			FAIRMOUNT LONG TERM CARE d/b/a PHILADELPHIA NURSING HOME					
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Philadelphia (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)			County of Residence of First Listed Defendant Philadelphia (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY) NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.					
	Address, and Telephone Number) P.C.; 3331 Street Road, Two Greenwoo 19020; (215) 639-0801; akarpf@karp		Attorneys (If Known)					
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)	III. C		RINCIPAL PARTIES	Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintif			
1 U.S. Government X 3 Federal Question Plaintiff (U.S. Government Not a Party)		Citiz	(For Diversity Cases Only) PT ten of This State	F DEF I Incorporated or Princ of Business In TI				
2 U.S. Government Defendant			zen of Another State	2 2 Incorporated <i>and</i> Print of Business In A				
			en or Subject of a country	3 Foreign Nation	6 6			
IV. NATURE OF SUIT					f Suit Code Descriptions.			
GONTRACT 1 10 Insurance 1 120 Marine 1 130 Mitter Act 1 140 Negotiable Instrument 1 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment 1 51 Medicare Act 1 52 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) 1 53 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits 1 160 Stockholders' Suits 1 190 Other Contract 1 195 Contract Product Liability 1 196 Franchise REAL PROPERTY 2 10 Land Condemnation 2 20 Foreclosure 2 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment 2 40 Torts to Land 2 45 Tort Product Liability 2 290 All Other Real Property	PERSONAL INJURY 310 Airplane 315 Airplane Product Liability 320 Assault, Libel & Slander 330 Federal Employers' Liability 340 Marine 345 Marine Product Liability 350 Motor Vehicle Product Liability 360 Other Personal Injury 362 Personal Injury Medical Malpractice FIVIL RIGHTS 441 Voting 442 Employment 443 Housing/ Accommodations X 445 Amer. w/Disabilities-Other 448 Education PERSONAL INJU 367 Featlth Care/Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROP 370 Other Fraud 371 Truth in Lendin Property Dama; 385 Property Dama; 385 Property Dama; 385 Property Dama; 367 Health Care/Pharmaceutical Personal Injury PRSONAL PROP 370 Other Fraud 371 Truth in Lendin Property Dama; 385 Property Dama; 38	FRTY 0 6 Second of the second	ORFEITURE/PENALTY 25 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 90 Other 10 Fair Labor Standards Act 20 Labor/Management Relations 40 Railway Labor Act 11 Family and Medical Leave Act 90 Other Labor Litigation 91 Employee Retirement Income Security Act 11 Immigration 12 Immigration 13 Naturalization Application 15 Other Immigration 16 Other Immigration 17 Actions	** 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 ** 423 Withdrawal	OTHERS FATUTES 375 False Claims Act 376 Qui Tam (31 USC 3729(a)) 400 State Reapportionment 410 Antitrust 430 Banks and Banking 450 Commerce 460 Deportation 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations 480 Consumer Credit 490 Cable/Sat TV 850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange 890 Other Statutory Actions 891 Agricultural Acts 893 Environmental Matters 895 Freedom of Information Act 896 Arbitration 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes			
	moved from 3 Remanded from the Court Appellate Court	Red	pened Anothe (specify)	Autorit van				
VI. CAUSE OF ACTION Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity): Title VII (42USC2000); ADA (12101) Brief description of cause: Violations of Title VII, PDA, ADA, PHRA and the Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance.								
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P.		DEMAND \$		if demanded in complaint:			
VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY (See instructions): JUDGE								
DATE 7/17/2018 SIGNATURE OF ATJORNEY OF RECORD								
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY		7			A			
RECEIPT# AM	MOLINT APPLYING IF	Þ	ллос	MAG. JUD	OGE			

Reset